

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 TEGUCI 02112 032053Z
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C O N F I D E N T I A L TEGUCIGALPA 2112

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: ELAB, PINT, HO
SUBJ: LABOR DAY RALLIES

REF: TEGUCIGALPA 1971

1. LABOR DAY WAS CELEBRATED AT THREE SEPARATE LOCATIONS AND IN
WIDELY DIVERSE MANNERS IN HONDURAS, MAY 1. BOTH THE STRENGTH AND
DISUNITY OF THE LABOR MOVEMENT WERE PUBLICLY DISPLAYED.

2. IN TEGUCIGALPA THE ABSENCE OF SUCH RESPONSIBLE LEADERS AS
CONFEDERACION DE TRABAJADORES DE HONDURAS (CTH) SECRETARY-
GENERAL VICTOR ARTILES WAS NOTED. REYES RODRIGUEZ, PRESIDENT
OF THE ASOCIACION NACIONAL DE CAMPESINOS (ANACH), PROBABLY
WISHED HE HAD STAYED AWAY, TOO, AS HIS ATTEMPT TO ADDRESS RALLY
OF FEW THOUSAND WORKERS AND CAMPESINOS WAS HALTED BY A BARRAGE
OF FRUIT AND VEGETABLES. PRESUMABLY, SOURCE OF THE ATTACK WAS
RIVAL UNION NACIONAL DE CAMPESINOS' (UNC) COMPONENT OF CROWD,
AS RODRIGUEZ HAD MADE AN ILL-TIMED ANNOUNCEMENT TWO DAYS PRE-
VIOUSLY THAT ANACH DID NOT SUPPORT UNC OPERATIONS IN COUNTRYSIDE
SEEKING LAND FOR CAMPESINOS USING MASSIVE SQUATTER TACTICS
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PAGE 02 TEGUCI 02112 032053Z

(REFTEL).

3. ANOTHER LIVELY CELEBRATION TOOK PLACE IN EL PROGRESO WHERE
THE "INTERSINDICAL COMMITTEE" (DISSIDENT UNIONS THAT WALKED OUT
OF THE NORTH COAST LABOR FEDERATION -(FESITRANH)- LAST YEAR)
INVITED A GROUP OF LEFTISTS AND VARIOUS SHADES OF COMMUNISTS
FOR THE DAY. WHEN MAOISTS MARCHED IN BEARING PLACARDS OF UNCLE

SAM AND SOVIETS LABELED "HEGEMONISTAS", A PRO-MOSCOW FACTION TOOK OFFENSE AND STREET BATTLE FOLLOWED. INJURIES APPEARED TO BE CONFINED TO FEW HEADS THAT COULDN'T WITHSTAND WELL-PLACED WHACKS WITH PLACARDS.

4. MOST SEDATE OBSERVANCE TOOK PLACE IN HONDURAS' THRID CITY, LA CEIBA, WHERE FESITRANH GAVE ITS BLESSING TO EVENT, WHICH WAS ORGANIZED BY COUNTRY'S SECOND LARGEST LABOR UNION, SINDICATO DE TRABAJADORES DE STANDARD FRUIT COMPANY (SUTRASFCO). VICE MINISTER OF LABOR AND SOCIAL WELFARE ALEJANDRO ALVAREZ AND LOCAL OFFICIALS ATTENDED LA CEIBA RITES, (THE ONLY ONE IN WHICH GOH OFFICIALS TOOK PART). ALSO PRESENT WERE STANDARD FRUIT OFFICIALS, ANACH SECRETARY-GENERAL ANTONIO JULIO MENDEZ AND MISSING CTH SECRETARY-6&3,34-) ;8:594 -458)3 , WHO ELECTED TO STAY AWAY FROM TEGUCIGALPA CELEGATION AND RETURN TO HIS SUTRASFCO HOME UNION FOR THE DAY.

5. ALL THREE LABOR DAY CELEBRATIONS WERE WELL-ATTENDED AND RECEIVED HEAVY PRESS COVERAGE. PARADES, ENTERTAINMENT, AND SPEECHES WERE FEATURED EVERYWHERE. TYPICAL LABOR THEMES PREVAILED, THOUGH EL PROGRESO MANIFESTATION LAMBASTED LARGEST CAST OF VILLAINS (TRANSNATIONALS, GOH, US, SOMOZA, CAPITALISTS, ETC.).

6. IN TEGUCIGALPA, LABOR MINISTER ADALBERTO DISCUA WAS LABELED AN "ENEMY OF THE WORKING CLASS," THE MAYOR, THE POLICE, CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 TEGUCI 02112 032053Z

MUNICIPAL WATER AND ELECTRICTY AUTHORITIES ALSO TOOK THEIR LUMPS AS "ENEMIES OF THE PEOPLE." CHIEF OF STATE MELGAR CASTRO AND HIS REGIME WERE ROUNDLY DENOUNCED FOR ALLEGED PHONY ATTEMPTS AT "DIRECT CONTACT" WITH GRASS ROOTS. (DIRECT CONTACT WITH THE PEOPLE IS THE MOST RECENT PUBLIC RELATIONS CAMPAIGN BEING SPONSORED BY THE MINISTY OF INFORMATION). PERHPAS MOST POPULAR THEME WERE CALLS FOR INCREASE IN MINIMUM WAGE.

7. WHEREAS POSTERS AND PLACARDS WERE IMPORTANT FEATURES OF THE RALLIES IN TEGUCIGALPA AND EL PROGRESO, AT LA CEIBA FLAG CARRYING CHARACTERIZED THE PARADE THAT PRECEDED THE RALLY, AND ORATORS MERELY ASKED THE GOH TO ACCELERAGE AGRARIAN REFORM.

8. IN NORTH COAST CAPITAL OF SAN PEDRO SULA, SEAT OF FESITRANH, THERE WAS NO CELEBRATION AT ALL.NATION'S LARGEST SINGLE UNION, SINDICATO DE TRABAJADORES DE TELA RAILROAD COMPANY (UNITED FRUIT-SITRATERCO), HEADQUARTERED IN NEARBY LA LIMA, ELECTED TO BOYCOTT ALL THREE 1978 CELEBRATIONS, APPARENTLY DUE TO SPLIT ON ITS EXECUTIVE BOARD BETWEEN COMMUNIST AND ANIT-COMMUNIST FACTIONS.

9. COMMENT: UNDER THE RESTRICTIONS IMPOSED BY CURRENT MILITARY

REGIME, LABOR DAY CELEBRATION PROVIDES ONLY OCCASION FOR A NON-GOVERNMENT SPONSORED LARGE POLITICAL GATHERING, AND AS SUCH IS A USEFUL INDICATION OF POPULAR DISATISFACTION. THERE WAS PERHAPS MORE GRIST FOR THE MILL THIS YEAR IN THE FOR OF SCANDALS, INFLATION, ETC., AND A NUMBER OF ORGANIZATIONS UNHAPPY WITH THE PRESENT STATE OF AFFAIRS TOOK THE OPPORTUNITY TO LAMBASTE THE GOH, WHICH PRESS FULLY EXPLOITED. POLITICIANS OF ALL PARTIES DID NOT ESCAPE WRATH OF MAY 1 ORATORS, WHO INCLUDED WORKER, CAMPESINO, AND STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES. ABSENCE OF POLITICAL LEADERS AND GOH REPRESENTATIVES AT TEGUCIGALPA CELEBRATION ALSO SUGGEST DEGREE OF SOCIAL ALIENATION OF WORKERS AND CAMPESINOS. LEFTISTS DOMINATED EL PROGRESO RALLY AND RIGHTISTS LA CEIBA, BUT BROADEST SPECTRUM OF WORKER-CAMPESINO ORGANIZATIONS (INCLUDING COMMUNISTS, CTH, CGT, ANACH, UNC, ETC.) WERE REPRESENTED AT
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 04 TEGUCI 02112 032053Z

TEGUCIGALPA. FACT THAT SUCH IMPORTANT MODERATE LEADERS AS VICTOR ARTILES AND CELEO GONZALES FELT IT UNWISE TO APPEAR AT CAPITAL RALLY, AND REYES RODRIGUEZ WAS NOT ALLOWED TO SPEAK, PORTENDS PROBLEMS FOR FUTURE DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL WORKER-CAMPESINO MOVEMENT.
JARAMILLO

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